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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

WILHELM DILTHEY AND THE CRISIS OF PSYCHOLOGY

BY

CORNELIS P. BOODT

(C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1991

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Cornelis Pieter Boodt

1637 - 105th street
Edmonton, Alberta
T6J 5W2

Date: Oct 11/91

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Wilhelm Dilthey and the crisis of psychology" submitted by Cornelis Pieter Boodt in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Basic Educational Psychology.

.....
Dr. John J. Mitchell
(Co-supervisor)

.....
Dr. John W. Osborne

.....
Dr. Leendert P. Mos
(Co-supervisor & External)

Date: .....Oct. 1/91.....

ABSTRACT

With reference to the crisis between knowledge and life with which Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) struggled in his 'critique of historical reason', it is proposed that the current crisis of psychology parallels the crisis that marked psychology at the turn of the 19th century. In Chapter 1, it is documented that psychology's adherence to a philosophy of positivism, a philosophy now entirely suspect with the 'historical turn' in epistemology, is incoherent with respect to the explanation of human actions. A post-positivistic psychology is necessarily embedded in social-cultural practices that are resolutely anti-foundationalist in preserving the intentional idiom. In Chapter 3, the intentional idiom of 'folk psychology' is situated within a post-foundationalist epistemology that rejects the hegemony of methods and turns instead to a systematic self-understanding within practical contexts. It is argued that a post-foundationalist psychology, as a social-culturally situated understanding of persons, cannot be independent of the other human sciences.

In the second half of this thesis a post-foundationalist psychology is articulated with reference to Dilthey's hermeneutics of 'life expressions' as grounded in an understanding of lived experience. Within the context of the historicity of all understanding, it is argued in Chapter 4 that an understanding of lived experience constitutes the psychological foundation of its social-cultural expressions in the historical course of individual lives. Lived experience is the starting point for a quest in an understanding of 'human nature'. Chapter 5 concludes with a discussion of Dilthey's hermeneutics as the proposed methodology for systematic understanding the meaning of life expressions and, therefore, the understanding of others and ourselves - a resolution to the crisis of life and knowledge within a post-foundationalist vision of a psychology of our human nature.

PREFACE

This thesis constitutes part of a much larger work on Wilhelm Dilthey's contributions to psychology submitted by the author in partial fulfillment for the M. Ed. degree. The larger work was deemed to be an appropriate basis for the Doctoral dissertation and, hence, the thesis presented here essentially consists of the first and last chapters of what is expected to become the dissertation.

In the following, parts of Chapters 1 - 3 have appeared in Wm J. Baker, M. E. Hyland, R. van Hezewijk, and S. Terwee (Eds.), Recent trends in theoretical psychology: Volume 2 (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1991). Parts of Chapters 3, 4, and 5 are now in press in B. Kaplan, H. Stam, L. P. Mos, and W. Thorngate (Eds.), Recent trends in theoretical psychology: Volume 3 (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1992). These volumes are the published proceedings of the 3rd and 4th Biennial Conferences of the International Society of Theoretical Psychology. The 3rd Conference (Volume 2) was held in Arnhem, Holland, April 17 - 21, 1989; the 4th conference (Volume 3) was held in Worcester, MA, June 24 - 29, 1991. The author acknowledges the Department of Educational Psychology and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research at the University of Alberta for a travel grant to present his work at the 3rd Conference held in Holland.

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The majority of my praise however, goes to Leo Mos my mentor and friend. Leo continues to play an integral role not only in the development of my thought but also in my development as a person. For all of this I am truly in his debt.

Finally I wish to thank my family and friends who have had to suffer through innumerable lectures on the nature of the world and those who live in it. They have perhaps unwittingly been the foil that spurred me on in my education. To all of you, thanks!

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1. THE CRISIS OF SCIENCE AND LIFE:
A PRETEXT FROM THE LIFE AND WORK OF WILHELM DILTHEY

> Thus the present is filled with the past and carries the future within itself. This is the meaning of the word 'development' in in the human studies. (Dilthey, 1961/1906-1910, p. 232)

In his biographical sketch of Wilhelm Dilthey, the philosopher Michael Ermarth (1978) quotes Dilthey's midlife (circa 1873) personal testimony to the "deep impulse which dominated his life and work:

> "The great crisis of the sciences and European culture which we are now living through has so deeply and totally taken possession of my spirit that the desire to be of some help in it has extinguished every extraneous and personal ambition (p. 15, cited from Der junge Dilthey, vii; italics CPB).

Dilthey's thought and works, as various other commentators (e.g. Hodges, 1952; Makkreel, 1975) have also emphasized, cannot be understood apart from the context of this sense of enduring crisis. While this crisis, as the philosopher-historian Mandelbaum (1971) has documented, was far from being a merely academic matter, the sense of crisis was perhaps most acute in the intellectual sphere where the foundations of reason and knowledge were at stake and, with them, the prospects of a civilization increasingly shaped by their imperatives. Dilthey deemed that this crisis was engendered by a deep chasm between life and thought, between lifeless thought and thought-less life. On the one hand, there were the intellectuals and

philosophers who held to eternal ideals and principles, on the other, there were the scientists, especially of the newly emerging social sciences, and those concerned with practical affairs, who disdained theory and eschewed the larger philosophical perspective and its accomplishments. Moreover, Dilthey was deeply distressed that such academic disciplines as ethics, aesthetics, jurisprudence, and pedagogy were hardly taken seriously by ordinary people. "Dogmaticism prevailed in the lecture hall, while skepticism held sway in the streets. Formal thought and inquiry were out of touch with practical life and the conditions of a changing world" (Ermarth, 1978, p. 16).

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the power of reason and science to control nature and provide for the practical necessities of life stood in sharp contrast to the larger questions of meaning and purpose. Wissenschaft, those specialized systems of scientific knowledge, appeared to be in direct conflict with Weltanschauung, that broader and more integrative view of world and life. This conflict, as Mandelbaum (1971) has noted, was epitomized in the intellectual domain in the clash between idealism and historicism which dominated the first half, and positivism which dominated the second half of the nineteenth century. Or, as the neo-Kantian philosopher Ernst Cassirer (1950) suggests, the nineteenth century was a continual battle, in extremis, between the two tendencies of 'spiritualization' and 'naturalization'. The former held to the transcendent power of mind (Geist) to construct the world in thought and the ideal of aesthetic freedom, while the latter was convinced that the methods of the natural sciences could be extended to include the entire range of human thought and conduct. It was pre-eminently Dilthey who undertook the task to mediate these extremes through a proper understanding of the human mind and its expressions. He was convinced that the human sciences (Geisteswissenschaften), among which he included psychology, could offer empirical and positive knowledge of

persons and their cultures which, however, was radically different from the methods and knowledge proferred by the natural sciences. Nevertheless, the Geistewissenschaften, or human sciences, could fulfill this function only if they were placed on a firm foundation, yet avoiding both metaphysical speculation and naturalistic positivism. Continuing in the direct lineage of Immanuel Kant, who offered a 'critique of pure reason' in an attempt to provide a foundation for the physical sciences, Dilthey undertook to establish a foundation of this other part of the "globus intellectualis" in his 'critique of historical (social-cultural) reason' (Hodges, 1952, p. xiv). By means of a new form of reason and self-understanding, Dilthey sought to overcome the crisis that had arisen between the separation of life and knowledge - between Wissenschaft and Weltanschauung.

2. CRISIS OF WISSENSCHAFT: ABANDONING POSITIVISM

It is my contention that the crisis Dilthey lived near the end of the 19th century parallels the crisis confronting psychology today. This crisis is documented in Chapter 2 with respect to psychology's adherence to a philosophy of positivism - a philosophy now largely suspect with the 'historical turn' in epistemology; and in Chapter 3 with respect to the recovery of the language of 'folk psychology' - the intentional idiom - in a post-foundationalist, historically and social-culturally situated understanding of persons.

Just over a century after Wilhelm Wundt founded an autonomous science of psychology, employing the methods of the natural sciences - 'physiological psychology' - Sigmund Koch (1976) documents that psychology as a discipline has always been in conceptual crisis. "The most conspicuous trend in the history of psychology", writes Koch, "has been towards theoretical and subtstantive fractionation (and increasing insularity among the specialties), not integration" (pp. 480-481). If at various times this crisis was laid to rest, it was only by a coerced view of "empirical testing, rational reconstruction, and operationism" as the appropriate epistemology or methodology of the discipline (p. 478). "[I]t is a paradox" continues Koch, "that a 'science' which for over one hundred years has taken vast pride in its hard-won independence from philosophy has, over much of that interval, continued to seek out its marching orders from that queen of many edicts" (p. 479). It is precisely those edicts which fall under the generic label of the philosophy of 'positivism' which have recently fallen into

disrepute with the 'historical turn' in the philosophy of science (Boodt & Mos, 1991). While the abandonment of positivism or 'foundationalism' (Rorty, 1979) in philosophy of science has had immediate implications, as Thomas Kuhn (1970/1962) documented, for the natural sciences, the implications for psychology, the human sciences, and the humanities are beginning to be explored.

2.1 Explaining human actions: positivism

The enduring crisis in psychology is nowhere more salient than with respect to human actions and expressions. The description and explanation of human actions and expressions remains, in spite of psychology's almost exclusive focus on 'behavior', the site of contending conceptions of psychology as a science. As Margolis (1990) suggests, there is probably no descriptive or explanatory literature about human action that is uncontested, or so rigorous that a would-be scientific psychology testing the prospect of formulating covering laws (e.g. Hempel, 1965) would be bound to accept its findings. Indeed, the appropriateness of formulating covering law explanations of human action is itself open to question. Furthermore, what might be intended by causal explanations of action and the nature of the psychological laws from which such explanations might be deduced, is itself in dispute. Thus, the interesting questions about explaining human actions and expressions reside at the conceptual level of characterizing or describing the phenomena of actions themselves. What the foregoing suggests is that a theory of describing and explaining actions is conceptually inseparable from the question of the nature of psychology as an autonomous science.

In this century, psychology has been almost entirely governed by the 'unity-of-science' model (Oppenheim & Putnam, 1958), stemming from the Vienna Circle, which incorporated most of the features of positivism, empiricism, and naturalism that characterized the natural sciences, including psychology, in the second half of the nineteenth century. Margolis (1990, p. 46ff.) claims that the unity-of-science program is committed to (a) physicalism, (b) extensionalism, and (c) the universality and invariance of causal laws. Thus, for example, Sellars (1963) maintains that the empirical or phenomenological laws of a domain are approximations of its theoretical or explanatory laws which define the hypothetically 'real' entities and processes of that domain. In turn, a domain's theoretical laws can explain why and in what regard the empirical or phenomenological laws that characterize the observed world may be construed as 'folk' (in ordinary language) appearances of the real world.

Physicalism is expressed in various versions from the strongest, which holds that persons actually do not exist, through to the reduction of persons to physical bodies and, finally, to the treatment of the everyday 'folk' idiom of persons, and their actions, as extensionally equivalent to a language adequate for the description and explanation of physical bodies and movements. Margolis (1990, p. 41) terms these versions, respectively, eliminative physicalism, reductive physicalism, and non-reductive physicalism. While physicalism, of whatever variety, is a subset of materialism, the latter must be carefully distinguished from reductive and non-reductive physicalism (Tolman, 1990). In any case, what is currently referred to as 'scientific realism' encompasses any of the above versions of physicalism within the context of the unity-of-science movement.

'Eliminative physicalism' denies that persons are a distinct ontological category and has as its aim the elimination of the 'folk' psychology idiom from the discipline altogether (Churchland, 1979). 'Reductive physicalism' reduces persons to physical bodies by asserting a type-token identity of mental states to brain processes (Fodor, 1968). We find this position held by neo-behavorists and, more recently, behaviorists cum cognitivists, both of whom maintain that psychology is an incipient biological science. 'Non-reductive physicalism' treats the intentional idiom, currently in vogue in the cognitive science literature as 'folk psychology', as extensionally equivalent to a language adequate for, and restricted to, the description and explanation of physical bodies and movements (Dennett, 1987). The latter view was implicitly held by some neo-behaviorists but is also common among the 'new mentalists', or cognitivists. Where any of these versions of physicalism is thought to be premature, independent extensional treatments of the intentional idiom are proposed entirely in functionalist, or variablist terms (Putnam, 1988).

For example, with respect to language, Chomsky (1984) maintains that the semantic and pragmatic aspects of language are extensionally rooted in its deep grammatical structures. Similarly, Fodor (1987) claims that thought and inference are to be construed linguistically where the formal structure of natural languages is extensionally modelled in accord with a truth-functional semantics. Finally, Simon (1977) suggests that all the informational (semantic) contents of mental states can be extensionally modelled or simulated, thereby giving rise to a full-fledged information processing view of the human mind. While none of these endeavors may be said to be incoherent, the regimentation of the intentional idiom in extensional terms relies entirely on such ineliminable folk psychological concepts as 'description', 'explanation', and 'understanding'.

Extensionalism is usually understood as any theory which holds that the language of science will conform to the properties of a first-order calculus (Margolis, 1990, p. 44). That is, an extensional analysis is one that describes and explains the phenomena, or structures of the world, as if they were physical entities and processes as hypothetically defined by a domains's theoretical or explanatory laws. The latter are taken to be universal nomological sentences or propositions defining a domain of investigation as deterministic and, hence, as a closed system in which whatever is real can be described in terms of its invariant laws (see e.g. Nagel, 1961; Scheffler, 1963). On this account, psychology is a science in search of causal explanations with reference to hypothetical entities (MacCorquodale & Meehl, 1948), defined by its theoretical laws - presumably like any physical science.

During this century, psychology whether in its various behaviorist versions or the current cognitivist, or mentalist, versions, either explicitly embraced physicalism or else held to a non-reductionist physicalism or extensionalism. The latter view is more or less ontologically neutral - brain and mind are not distinguished - and insists on the functional autonomy of psychology as a 'natural' science. Such a psychology need only to preserve the truth value of its extensionally descriptive and explanatory sentences expressed in an intentional, or 'folk', language. Thus, synonymy is not required, just the truth value of extensional sentences in all possible intentional contexts (e.g. Fodor, 1987). This is what psychologists of the behaviorist era - logical empiricists - knew as operationism, or theory instrumentalism, and its classical experimental paradigm is that of 'variable' functionalism (for a review see Block, 1980).

Even so, the unity-of-science model proposed by the Vienna Circle is probably best not construed as a unity-of-method (the empirical-inductive method), or a unity-of-ontology (physicalism or, more broadly, materialism) model but, rather, as a unity-of-explanation (hypothetical-deductive), or the explanatory subsumption model. The unity of explanation model, explanation by subsumption under invariant laws, more accurately characterizes the unity-of-science model even though few such explanations of action have actually been attempted in psychology (cf. Clark Hull's Principles of Behavior).

2.2 Positivism under attack: the historical turn

In recent years the scientific realism of the unity-of-science program has come under severe attack both from within the natural sciences (e.g. Kuhn, 1970/1962) and philosophy (Popper, 1983/1956; Rorty, 1979). The 'historical turn', in an attempt to understand (the failure of) 'scientific progress', has shed serious doubts on the strict realist reading of theoretical or causal laws and hence, also, the unobserved hypothetical entities postulated to 'behave' in accord with these theoretical laws. Consequently, even in the physical sciences (see Van Fraassen, 1980; Hacking, 1983), these theoretical laws and their postulated hypothetical entities are construed as realist only with reference to experimental, technical, or predictive activities centered on the phenomenological evidence. Such methodological or experimental constraints are said to be 'anti-realist', which is to say realist enough for science, but opposed to the strong scientific realism characteristic of nomological-deductive explanation. Strict invariances are on this account impossible, or only reflect idealizations and distortions introduced for the sake of explanation (Cartwright, 1983), and are merely 'instrumental' to the pursuit of an open-ended science of 'abductive' guesses, or

else, an inductive 'tracing back' to origins or causes (McMullin, 1985).

If this 'anti-realist' picture of natural science precludes any form of determinism and, hence, scientific realism, then causal explanations of, for example, human action are most surely put into question. On the 'anti-realist' view, any realism must treat the experienced or phenomenological world as the real world, or at least, as an ineliminable part of the real world. Moreover, if theoretical laws are idealizations, then it becomes possible to argue that nomologicality, or lawfulness, is distinct from causality and that the latter need not be nomological, or behave extensionally (see the exchange between Weimer, 1984, and Rozeboom, 1984).

This disjunction between lawfulness and causality yields two fundamentally different conceptions of causality that may appear in the explanation of 'natural' phenomena - including human actions and culture. On the one hand, there is the physicalist, or scientific realist, notion of subsumption under invariant covering laws and, on the other, there is causality construed as 'agency', where agency refers to the enabling capacities, or 'powers' (of persons). On this dual conception of causality, the person is capable of effecting, or causing deliberate actions in accord with choice and purpose. In such an account, a person's actions are not reducible to physical movements, even if the causality of movements is how actions are incarnated (Margolis, 1990, p. 48). All of this has been taken to support the resurgence of a 'folk' psychological conception of action in which agency is deemed to be intentionally complex and not reducible. This view constitutes a radical critique of the unity-of-science program but it is not yet fully persuasive that the natural and human sciences cannot fall under a single canon.

For example, the question may be raised as to how it is possible that the explanation of actions requires conceptual distinctions that cannot be resolved in extensionalist terms especially if, as is usually granted, the entire world, including mind and society, has evolved in a continuous way from common primeval sources (Dewart, 1989). In raising this question, Margolis (1990) suggests that a conceptual and methodological discontinuity between the natural and human sciences is suggested in the inquiring activities of scientists themselves. That is, the (psychological) complexities of scientifically inquiring persons are reflected in the impossibility of an extensional science of their social-cultural, including scientific, practices as persons.

However, this is not so much a paradox as it is to acknowledge what is distinctively human in the acquiring of scientific knowledge itself. Polanyi (1964/1958) has persuasively argued that science as a human activity cannot deny its rootedness in actual persons. For it is surely persons who conduct science, and formulate scientific knowledge and explanations. But this leads us to the extraordinary consequence that the chief evidence for the 'realism' of a 'folk psychological' conception of psychology may be found in the activities of scientists (psychologists) themselves. On this view, physicalism, extensionalism, and the unity-of-science program are methodological artifacts which are ultimately accessible only at the level of 'folk psychology' - the intentional idiom. This re-cognition of the human permeability of scientific knowledge has received its most forceful articulation in the anti-foundationalism of philosophical inquiry (Rorty, 1979).

The anti-foundationalism in philosophy - in line with the historical turn in the philosophy of science - has brought with it a resurgence of folk psychology in our understanding of the

conduct of science, and to a limited extend in the cognitive orientation of psychology, and the human sciences. The language of persons, intentionality, rationality, purposiveness, action, morality, history, traditions, institutions, and culture, etc. is increasingly recognized as essential to all the sciences, but especially psychology, the social sciences, the humanities, and the fine arts. Not unexpectedly, the adherents of physicalism are inclined to say that this use of language is merely a manner of speaking with respect to what we independently know to form the real or actual phenomena of psychology. But the difficulty with this 'positivistic' position is that its adherents are unable to explain how, or with respect to precisely what, the folk idiom is systematically effective. Moreover, they are unable to explain what it means to treat the folk, or intentional, idiom in functional (variable), or relational, terms if one of the anchors of this relation is persons.

Psychologists in confronting this dilemma have resorted to the dual options of functionalism (Block, 1980, Vol. 1). Either the intentional, purposive, information processing language used to ascribe functions, roles, and intentional significance to physically specified phenomena is ultimately eliminable (much as phenomenological laws give way to theoretical laws in the unity-of-science program), or else, it constitutes a merely informative and convenient way of linking what are, in principle, physical processes that do not as yet yield to law-like formulations in just those terms - and, hence, are treated functionally as having regularized import in terms of their non-lawlike connections. The latter non-reductive physicalism is the current view of cognitive psychology. The problem is that if the world is actually centered in the life of persons and cannot be regimented in any functionalist (variable-like) manner, then functionalism must give way to a view that the human world is fully real, emergent, and reflexively accessible in the intentional idiom (of experience,

language, actions, expressions, gestures, etc). But, as Margolis (1990) writes, "...to admit that is just to admit, once, again, the sui generis nature of psychology or of a folk science of human action" (p. 52).

Before elaborating on the implications of a 'folk psychological' conception of the human sciences, it is appropriate to briefly review two problems which have traditionally and justifiably worried the physicalists. The first problem is that we customarily recognize actions or expressions without reference to their physical movements that incarnate these (e.g. Melden, 1961). In our social-cultural world, we spontaneously recognize actions and expressions, including language, without attention to their physical instantiation (much as we ascertain the meaning of a sentence without regard to its syntactic or phonological form). We share in our culture, what Ludwig Wittgenstein calls 'forms of life', sets of conventional practices or institutional actions, which enable all its participants to interpret to some extent or other regularities that, nevertheless, remain continuously open to improvisation. In short, there is no reason to believe that for any action or set of actions, there are determinate physical movements, formulizable in physicalist or extensionalist terms, that would link the latter with the former. Indeed, the relation between actions and physical movements is so open ended and so subject to change, that these are understandable only in terms of the intentional complexes of a particular culture or society. Understanding actions is itself to be characterized as a linguistic achievement within a particular historical-cultural context.

The second problem is that of rationality or the fixation of belief (Fodor, 1983; Putnam, 1988), namely, that there is in principle no closure on the number of relevant intentional mental states thereof and, hence, no law-like regularities

involving such states that would 'fix' the belief or action. Moreover, all mental states are intensionally or meaningfully specified under particular ascriptions, both because they individually designate intentional states and because each such ascription is holistically constrained by the ascribability of other intentional states. In other words, there is no way to provide appropriate descriptions or explanations of human action except in terms of the practices, conventions, norms, institutions, traditions, or culture of a particular historical era. Human mentation and conduct is accessible only in terms of our familiarity with the forms of social life belonging to one's own and others' societies. As Margolis (1990) concludes "...the description of action is ineluctably a matter of interpreting relatively unquestioned simple actions as action rightfully falling under this description or that" (p. 55). Rationality is ineluctably holistic.

Nevertheless, this conclusion raises some pressing problems. Just what is the role of the meaning of objectivity in psychology, and what is the relationship between the psychological and the social-historical (Boodt & Mos, 1990)? Once it is granted that intentional description is pre-formatively influenced by social, cultural, historical, as well as individual, 'forms of life', and once it is granted that the objectivity of intentional descriptions is dependent upon conventional linguistic practices, it clearly becomes impossible to claim that there is a uniquely correct, however realist, characterization of human actions. Realism, then, cannot be separated from the realization of a moderate relativism as recent anti-foundationalist writers, in both the Continental hermeneutical (Gadamer, 1975/1965) and Anglo-American pragmatical traditions (Rorty, 1979) have fully recognized.

Nor can the ascription of intentionality, of meaning, to human actions, expressions, and productions be restricted, under whatever realist conception, to what is individually rational and conscious. Individual human conduct may be rationally construed as instantiating social-cultural and historical meanings of which individuals may be totally unaware as, for example, Sigmund Freud so astutely documented. However, the point was already made by Dilthey (1976/1900) when, in his later historical writings, he explicitly moved beyond the hermeneutics of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) who inspired him and who sought by way of his classical (Romantic) hermeneutics to "divine' the true intention of the author. Instead, Dilthey proposed a historical hermeneutics of individual life expressions the meanings of which, however, may not be transparent to the individual whose life expressions these are. Dilthey understood that the interpreter or critic may know the author or artist better than they know themselves. On this account we may justifiably, in fully realist terms, retrospectively attribute intentions of what was said, done, or enacted. Moreover, on this view, Dilthey (Hodges, 1952) understood that not even his descriptive and analytical psychology (Dilthey, 1977/1894) could constitute an autonomous and foundational basis for the human sciences; instead, psychology was integrally dependent upon the other Geisteswissenschaften, just as these needed psychology.

That individual human action and expression may exhibit social-historical meanings of which the individual may be unaware, or did not in any sense intend to express, bestows, within some limits of interpretive consensus, a measure of objectivity to our ascriptions. But, clearly, this concept of objectivity is radically different from that which we are familiar with in the natural sciences, or under any extensional analysis of the intentional. Nor can we escape this difference as for example Fiske (1986) proposes, by breaking down complex

actions into simpler behaviors, for the description of these simpler behaviors also requires an intentional idiom as readily as complex actions and expressions. As Franz Brentano and Edmund Husserl (Smith & McIntyre, 1982), but especially Wilhelm Dilthey (1977/1894) have pointed out, the objectivity of our descriptions of human actions depends on the minimal consensus within the limits of our linguistic practices within a particular community at some level of interpretation or understanding (of "lived experience"), and not on some more elementary level of physically identified and extensionally defined behaviors.

2.3. Psychology as human science: post-positivism

But what is entailed in acknowledging that human actions are intentionally complex? Margolis (1990), who believes that in the physical sciences causality is extensional and nomological whereas the human sciences require a conception of causality as agency, suggests that an answer to this question constitutes the conceptual and methodological divide between the natural and human sciences. Those who maintain that the intentional mode can be safely treated extensionally (e.g. Davidson, 1984/1970; Dennett, 1987; Quine, 1960) object to a realist reading of intentionality because such readings would have to maintain that 'things' change under changing descriptions (e.g. Dennett, 1969). But this is a rather odd criticism in so far as the intentional mode itself does not, on some accounts at least (e.g. Gergen, 1986), permit us to identify one description as identical with another (the way we talk does make a difference to what we say). While the implications of this objection will be discussed below, presumably the major objection to the intentional idiom is that the causal efficacy of such intentional states is not subsumable under covering laws, or else, that the 'laws' ranging over intentional states and

actions are not in any sense like those in the physical sciences (Fodor, 1987). These and other difficulties inherent in the intentional mode are well recognized, and all lead to the conclusion that the unity-of-science program, including the physicalist - read, behaviorist, - and extensionalist - read, cognitivist - is entirely misconstrued as appropriate to our understanding of human actions.

A further complication, already alluded to in the previous section, is that a psychology which takes the intentional idiom seriously cannot be an autonomous discipline, distinct from the other human sciences. All that is individually human is understandable only in terms of the 'conventional structure' of languages, social practices, institutions, cultures, traditions, and histories in spite of the fact that these are not 'psychologically' collective entities, and that there is no collective 'mind'. Only individuals are 'agents' and while their actions and expressions are not describable in terms of 'atomic', pre-cultural or a-historical properties of individuals; yet, these properties are always incarnated in the sense of being ascribable to individual human beings. On this social-historical understanding of individuals and their actions and expressions, we may find, as indeed Dilthey (1977/1894) did, that the methodology of psychology, and the human sciences, is quite distinct from that of the natural sciences.

Some recent critics of the unity-of-science program also distinguish between the natural and human sciences, but unlike Margolis, their distinction is not based on a difference between their modes of explanation, rather they deem the distinction between the natural and human sciences to reside in their different orders of causal complexity. They argue that if the concept of 'causality' no longer exclusively belongs to extensional analysis, then a non-extensionalist analysis of causality (see for example, the work of Harré and Madden (1975),

Harré (1990), Bhaskar (1989)), radically changes the nature of all scientific inquiry. Scientific inquiry is not first and foremost the search for empirical regularities or generalizations, but an effort to search for the 'causal powers' of things which is pre-eminently a theoretical endeavor (Mos & Boodt, 1990). "Explanation is then not a question ofsubsumption; it is more like narrative, the effort to tell a story in which the pertinent causes are identified as they are concretely conjoined to bring about an effect" (Manicas, 1990, p. 93). The decisive confirmatory criterion of such narratives is not their empirical 'testability', but their 'explanatory power' where explanatory power is not captured by empirical generalizations but by theoretical, hypothetical, invariants (laws!) that need not be actualized in the empirical world, even if the empirical world must be consistent with those invariants (McMullin, 1985).

Once it is conceded that science is a theoretical and not, first of all, an empirical endeavor, a search for causal powers and not the formulation of empirical generalizations, we can also begin to appreciate that the physicalist and extensionalist program of the unity-of-science type may continue to have a place within scientific inquiry. However, any such place must recognize the historicized, relativized, and strongly hermeneutic account of human conduct, including the scientific formulation of knowledge. This is what I take to be the import of Kuhn's, (1970/1962) distinction between normal science, or 'puzzle solving', and revolutionary science, with regard to the natural sciences.

It was after all Thomas Kuhn who noted that scientific progress in the natural (physics) sciences is not merely a question of the logic of confirmation or testability, but one of historical understanding. But as I indicated above, in psychology, and all the human sciences, the very phenomena under study are inherently historicized, intentionally complex, and

the products of persons acting and interacting, and not merely the explanatory accounts of these phenomena, as Kuhn would have it with reference to the natural sciences. The nature of the persons and their actions and expressions - the subject matter of psychology, if not all the human sciences - is intentionally irreducible and historical. Hence, our understanding of psychology is an understanding, formed within the context of psychologists' own history, of what they take to be the historical phenomena for study. This is what Gadamer (1975/1965) termed the 'double hermeneutic' but the concept goes back as far at least as Wilhelm Dilthey. On this view, the causality of agency does not apply in the natural sciences and, hence, they are for this reason, distinct from the human sciences. The irreducibility of intentional discourse in the latter is resolutely anti-foundationalist - a position Margolis (1986) has termed 'traditionalism' in the sense that the progressive and shifting historical life of persons somehow manages to preserve a relatively constant, normative conception for describing, analyzing, and understanding human actions and expressions.

What is problematic is just how interpretative, or narrative, explanations of human actions and expressions can incorporate the concept of 'cause'. However, if causality need not behave extensionally, nor need entail nomologicality - agency may indeed function as a model of causality - and intensionally specified causes cannot be logically subsumed under invariant laws but can be understood under the conventions of life practices - then the hermeneutic complexity of the human world need not preclude talk of causality. Explanations by 'reason' rather than causes may be collected in a narrative account by assimilating cases to recognized exemplars of the narrative order or, in Dilthey's (1985/1892; 1977/1894) terms, 'types' (Tuttle, 1969). Whether such types or invariances behave nomologically remains an empirical question.

The point is important, however, for the problem for post-positivist traditionalists, who have rejected all foundations, is how to achieve objectivity, or validity, of their theoretical or narrative explanations. In order to avoid anarchical and idealogical, that is subjectivistic, tendencies in narrative explanations, we must find some 'grounds' for these critically interpretative endeavors. Margolis (1990) in defending his traditionalism, writes that:

> "... if we take seriously the (Hegelian) notion of historical context of human life and inquiry as fixing the contingent minima within which an objective discipline may be formed, if we concede the naturally acquired aptitude of encultured (reflexive) humans to know and understand in general the practices of their own contingent society, and if we admit that the plural forms of cultural development that the human race exhibits are themselves grounded in the biological aptitude of one and the same species, then the possibilities of forming a notion of an objective psychology - whether narrative or causal - begin to seem manageable" (p. 66).

While such a 'pragmatic' conception does not in any way conform to the objectivist pretensions of the unity-of-science movement, it might still be entitled to a 'realist' interpretation. Thus, whether on a transcendentalist or materialist conception of the 'lived world', the unavoidability of historically prevailing norms in any empirical description, understanding, or explanation of human action and expression is readily acknowledged. Moreover such a pragmatic view is amenable to moderate forms of relativism and incommensurablism. It is precisely in this sense that psychology necessarily harbors, and has always harbored '<u>crisis</u>' (Koch, 1976). Revolutionary possibilities are inherently rooted in our social-historical, including linguistic, practices and in this sense can affect the very nature of psychology as a scientific endeavor.

3. CRISIS OF WELTANSCHAUUNG: POST-FOUNDATIONALISM

3.1 Anti-foundationalism in philosophy

The 'historical turn' in Anglo-American philosophy of science, away from positivism and towards what Margolis terms 'traditionalism', was narrated in Rorty's (1979) Philosophy and the mirror of nature where his unlikely philosophical heroes of the 20th century are the pragmatist, John Dewey, the lapsed phenomenologist, Martin Heidegger, and the fallen-away positivist, Ludwig Wittgenstein. All three 'philosophers' saw, even if from very different vantage points, that with the demise of the encompassing worldviews of Christendom in the 17th, and metaphysics in 18th and 19th centuries, the foundational role of philosophy in the 20th century was in every respect qualified by history and culture (cf. Sullivan, 1987).

It was German Idealism, following the 18th century preoccupation with historical evolution and progress and Kant's critical idealism, which first tried to cope at the turn of the 19th century with the question of truth, or reason, in history (Mandelbaum 1971). Dilthey avoided the extremes of the absolutization of reason, both as a priori, a-historical, logical structures of mind (Kant) or in its identity with the temporal course of history (Hegel), and as the otherwise very different historicists, materialists, and positivists who sought to modulate the absolutization of reason by bringing it into conformity with nature or history. If the former continued the course of metaphysics, the latter promoted epistemology, but in either case philosophy acquired a foundational role in an attempt to define and secure the rational grounds for knowledge

claims in the positive sciences. It was, according to Rorty, Dewey, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein, who all saw that since science, and all other human cultural endeavors, seemed to get on very well without philosophy, our 20th century post-Kantian culture no longer needed a foundational discipline whose role it was to legitimize or ground the other disciplines.

Rorty does not argue against the foundationalist role of philosophy. Instead, from within his transcendentalist vision of an Emersonian culture, he proceeds therapeutically to replace the Kantian quest for certitude - philosophy as a methodology of methodologies - with a rhetorical narrative whose task is to persuade that foundationalism is itself a cultural project we would do well to leave behind. In Anglo-American analytical philosophy, this pragmatic, anti-foundationalist, shift in philosophy is exemplified in the move away from language rooted in logic to a conception of language as a tool embedded in our social-historical practices. The concern is no longer solely with the logic of language, but with reason, or rationality as contextualized in a 'folk psychology' of common sense.

Rorty's anti-foundationalism, his claim that scientific rationality is always historically conditioned, is shared by Alasdair MacIntyre (1981) in his book <u>After virtue: A study in moral theory</u> . However, MacIntyre presents a rather different thesis from Rorty's of what it means to abandon foundationalism. MacIntyre confronts what he refers to as our contemporary inability to rationally secure moral agreement. Against Rorty's vision of a pragmatic, secular, and pluralistic culture, MacIntyre maintains that it is precisely this post-Kantian culture which precludes rational moral discourse and uncoerced moral action. However, this state of 'modernity' is not due to a failure of foundations, as much as it is to Kant's foundationalist attempt to ground moral principles in some necessary aspect of our reason or language was itself the result

of a loss of moral traditions. In other words, MacIntyre argues that it was Kant's foundationalism in the sphere of practical or moral reason that gave rise to our contemporary inability to converse about morality. In contrast, Rorty maintains that all attempts by philosophy (of epistemology) to ground inquiry are merely historical curiosities and, since there are no such foundations, our intellectual discourse is more like literary or cultural criticism than epistemology.

According to MacIntyre, in terms of recent history, foundationalism arose in Kant's critical idealist effort to secure autonomous domains of pure, or theoretical, and practical reason; to separate questions of truth from questions of value, so as to allow for valid claims in their respective spheres. This legacy, which dates as far back as Plato's distinction between universal immutable 'ideas' and contingent historical knowledge, led Kant, who rejected both rationalist metaphysics (Descartes) and skeptical empiricism (Hume), to propose a critical epistemology, in an effort to ground, not only natural scientific knowledge, but also moral action. But in his attempt to transcend the historically conditioned, Kant sought these foundations not in historical-social practices, but in putatively <u>a priori</u>, a-historical categories of reason. According to MacIntyre, the principle that one cannot derive value statements from factual statements, from any empirical claims of human happiness, but that these are instead imperatives of human 'pure practical reason', eventually led to the demise of moral thought and action. For on the theoretical and practical distinction, the distinction between pure and practical reason, theoretical reasoning was identified exclusively with <u>a priori</u>, logical, conditions of rationality, making it impossible to evaluate the truth claims put forward in action. Kant's autonomous sphere of moral reasoning with its own <u>a-priori</u>, logical, conditions of rationality made the whole sphere of practical reasoning tangential to the <u>truth</u> about practical affairs.

It is this distinction between the theoretical and practical which has given rise to what Rorty terms a foundationalist philosophy wherein the spectator who reasons theoretically is given logical priority over the actor who reasons practically (morally). If Kant's attempted to rescue morality by separating questions of the rationality of truth and the rationality of value, he also initiated, in part as the result of the enormous 19th century influence of positivistic science on traditional values, a loss of confidence in historical traditions and coherent social orders (cf. Hayek, 1973). It left discourse about facts unrelated to discourse about values.

But Kant's fact-value distinction, and his claim that universal moral norms must be free from any factual claims, failed because such norms constitute either unsupported belief rooted in intuition, or else, succumbed to the naturalistic fallacy in being based on factually existing moral practices or ideals. Both violate Kant's proscription that moral imperatives be derived solely from a priori, putatively universal and a-historical concepts - such as rational agency, freedom, and responsibility - of practical reason. Nineteenth century attempts to ground moral intuition in, for example, psychology failed, leaving moral intuitions as so many assertions, while recent attempts to revive Kant's moral faculty by recognizing that the rights of freedom and well-being must be extended to all as requisites of rational agency (Gerwirth, 1978), inevitably lead to an incommensurability of moral actions, and even the abandonment of moral discourse.

This is where MacIntyre's argument begins, namely, that there is no rational way of securing moral agreement in a society where the notion of rationality is founded on 'rights' or assertions of freedom and well-being. But, asks MacIntyre, what is the alternative to Kant's moral faculty, which finds moral principles in some necessary aspect of our reason, if not

Friedrich Nietzsche's claim that we are morally groundless and that all moral claims are only disguises of our individual will-to-power? If Nietzsche's diagnosis, which was a sequel to the eighteenth century discovery that social institutions and human culture were subject to historical evolution (Mandelbaum, 1971), that moral thought and action were nothing more than individual or collective assertions - sublimations of our biological drives, - then so are all foundationalist efforts, whether of critical idealism or of positivism, to ground moral language in a priori structures of mind or in actual social practices, at best, temporary footholds on a Nietzschean slippery slope. Thus, while MacIntyre accepts Nietzsche's diagnosis, he rejects the claim that individual morality is unable to generalize its standards in a rationally defensible way.

MacIntyre in his explication of a post-foundationalist conception of moral reason finds, like Rorty, that these foundations are superceded by a social-culturally located, historical reconstructions. However, unlike Rorty, MacIntyre, much like Dilthey before him, insisted that because historical judgments were species of moral judgments they therefore proceeded from the standpoint of practices which have normative status for the interpreter. Only in a society which has lost any sense of social-historical practices as normative practices, does morality become rationally constructivistic; a constructivism ('anything goes': Feyerabend, 1975) that undermines scientific inquiry once it abandons its foundations.

Both Rorty and MacIntyre share in the critique of philosophy as the guarantor of timeless rationality and move towards bringing philosophy into the general discourse of contemporary culture. They share in an anti-foundationalist critique of contemporary philosophy and adhere to a historicism which is neither irrational nor skeptical. It is essentially shaped by a

conception in which there is no final distinction between method-derived facts and values, or between theoretical and practical rationality. All thought must on their account carry with it an interpretation of the situation in which it occurs. However, unlike Rorty whose views are essentially pragmatic and constructivistic, MacIntyre, whose heroes are Hegel and Collingwood, insists that historical judgments are inherently moral judgments. Nevertheless, for both thinkers philosophy has lost its apodictical character and no longer holds a priviledged position, vis à vis the foundations of the sciences, or any other human cultural endeavor. If so, then philosophy has become post-foundationalist and is necessarily part of history, culture - or, as Dilthey would have it, the Geistewissenschaften - and practical life.

3.2 Post-foundationalism

Rorty's anti-foundationalist and MacIntyre's critique of a post-foundationalist philosophy, exemplify a convergence between Anglo-American analytic philosophy and developments in Continental philosophy. In contrast with the pragmatic turn in analytical philosophy, Continental philosophy has seen a shift away from a preoccupation with ontology and metaphysics, the a priori structure of reason or rationality, towards its expression in language (Gadamer, 1975/1965; Habermas, 1971/1968). If in analytic philosophy the logic of language and sense data no longer constitute a priviledged epistemological position, in Continental philosophy reason is seen as thoroughly embedded in our use of language - the 'hermeneutical turn' - already foreshadowed in Dilthey's (1976/1900; 1976/1910) later writings. Indeed, Dilthey along with Edmund Husserl may be counted among the predecessors of the hermeneutical movement in Continental philosophy.

Wilhelm Dilthey (1989/1883) counted philosophy among the Geisteswissenschaften which he deemed to be resolutely historical. Historical understanding was consequently elevated to the status of a hermeneutical principle; that is, the phenomena of concern to the human sciences were inextricably tied to our understanding, interpetation and clarification, of their meaning. However, Dithey (1977/1894) subjected historical understanding itself to critical examination within the context of the other human sciences, especially psychology, in an attempt to establish a hermeneutical methodology for the human sciences.

The other predecessor of the hermeneutical turn in Continental philosophy was Edmund Husserl who, ironically, attempted to recover for philosophy an autonomous and foundationalist role in the phenomenon of the constitution of intentionality in the sphere of the transcendental ego. However, it was Dilthey's influence on Heidegger and, following him, Habermas, Apel, and Gadamer, that led them to reject Husserl's neo-Kantian point of departure and reinterpret his phenomenological concepts in hermeneutical terms. Thus, Husserl's vocabulary of 'intentionality', 'perspectivity', 'intersubjectivity', and 'life-world' (Smith & McIntyre, 1982), intended to avoid the relativism of psychologism and historicism, were given explicit anti-foundationalist interpretations reminiscent of Dilthey's "understanding of life expressions". 'Intentionality' and 'perspectivity' no longer gave access to things themselves - to "essences" - but were replaced by understanding and interpretation putting the concept of constitution into doubt altogether. Hence, 'intersubjectivity' was no longer constituted by the ego but became part of the 'life-world', now conceived of as the social-cultural world of lived experience, or praxis, which precluded rationality and rigorous methodology (Grondin, 1987). Thus, when Paul Ricoeur finds the origins of contemporary

hermeneutics in Husserl's idealist presuppositions of phenomenology, one must be mindful that the historicism characteristic of Continental philosophy, as exemplified in the hermeneutical turn, must be be firmly located in the ideal-real (ism) of Dilthey's transcendental perspective. It was Dilthey (1976/1910) and, later Gadamer (1975/1965) who approached philosophy and all the human sciences from the perspective of a hermeneutical understanding. While Husserl foresaw this hermeneutization of reason, he strongly resisted any attempt to historicize philosophy which he, much like those in the positivistic tradition of the Vienna Circle, conceived of as a rigorous and foundationalist endeavor.

In Anglo-American philosophy, post-foundationalism is emerging as the first new philosophical perspective following the hegemony of positivistic philosophy in the natural and social sciences, and in theory and practice. It shares with European existentialist thinking a distrust of all theory and formal thought. Rorty and MacIntyre, along with Thomas Kuhn, Paul Feyerabend, Charles Taylor, as well as such Continental thinkers as Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jürgen Habermas, and Paul Ricouer have an abiding interest in culture, history, and practical reasoning. Yet their thought goes well back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, especially to Dilthey (1989/1883), but also to Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, James, Bergson, and Dewey, the 'Lebensphilosophen', who rejected all formalism in their attempt to come to an understanding of 'life'.

What is remarkable about the contemporary post-foundationalist successors of analytic and positivistic philosophy, such as Rom Harré, Joseph Margolis, Richard Rorty, and others, is their benign conservativism and acceptance of cultural pluralism, especially in science. By contrast, for such Continental thinkers as Gadamer and Habermas, who more astutely understand the link between Enlightenment rationalism and

revolutionary attempts to engineer societal changes, the absence of foundations has immediate moral and political implications. The danger with Anglo-American post-foundationalist thinking is its tendency towards tolerance and the propagation of the status quo. As Heidegger, Gadamer, and Habermas, who were all influenced by Dilthey (Ermarth, 1978; Makkreel, 1975), understood only too well, genuine pluralism whether in sciences or in society puts enormous pressure on competing methodologies, practices, and ideological commitments (Grondin, 1987). The gaps that divide these commitments are more than just social practices; rather, these social practices ineluctably admit of questions of validity or truth.

Rorty's work goes but little beyond Kuhn's which was restricted to the methodological level of historical practices in the physical sciences. As Kuhn so convincingly argues, there is not science, but there are sciences. However, by focusing entirely on the rootedness of knowledge in incarnate observers (Polanyi, 1964/1958), these thinkers often appear to be naive about the cultural context of the inquiring person. Thus, Rorty would have us replace the implicitly normative and conceptually unconditional foundations of knowledge with what he deems to be "currently valid reasons". The danger of such a position is that it either leads to skepticism or else reverts to foundationalism in an attempt to arbitrate its claims. But as, for example, Habermas argues, the claims for universal validity implicit in our actual practices are never finally redeemable. These claims for our practices, theories, interpretations, and understanding of ourselves and others, are always and everywhere dependent on the practical communicative and cultural tradition in which we are participants but which we can never exhaustively describe. Indeed, to pretend otherwise leads us back to a Cartesian dualism in which we are spectators standing outside what we aspire to know and understand. But Rorty eschewes the dialectics of communication in favour of a Wittgensteinian stand (Sullivan,

1987) of appealing to the relativity of all our reasons-giving in coping with practical decisions. For Rorty there is no metatheoretical discussion of this relativity of our reason giving. But as Habermas comments, Anglo-American anti-foundationalist thinking being instrumental and utilitarian in its attempt to get away from under the weight of the past, leads to the danger of technocratic management and the stifling of scientific, moral, and political debate. This is in agreement with MacIntyre's view that in a post-foundationalist society, there is no way to achieve consensus, in what he terms the crisis of "modernity".

Rorty in turn answers this criticism by suggesting that social progress is seldom a matter of deliberation and, through consensus, of higher synthesis. Thought and language are for him noble 'tools' which make possible an intelligible formulation of new and emerging social orders and individual purposes, which, however, are themselves in an evolutionary sense blind to higher purposes. Rorty, following Kuhn's distinction between normal and revolutionary science, does not deny that these tools give rise to creative bursts of science and culture, however, they are, on the analogy of evolutionary selection, self-justifying and in no need of foundations. At this point the chasm between post-foundationalists in the positivistic tradition and the hermeneutical thinkers in the Continental hermeneutical tradition becomes only too evident. Anglo-American philosophers oppose foundationalism in the positive sciences largely for methodological or meta-philosophical reasons, namely foundationalism impedes our understanding of scientific progress and fails to acknowledge our individual self-assertion. In contrast the Continental hermeneutical tradition, especially as it finds its roots in Dilthey's historicism, but also earlier in Hegel, and later in Husserl, Heidegger, and Gadamer, is deeply skeptical about scientific Enlightenment and focuses instead on the social and cultural traditions that serve to situate our

communal worlds. Gadamer's critique of foundationalism is first and foremost an appeal to non-instrumental forms of rationality in an effort to understand the social and cultural, including scientific, forces that are linguistically expressed in our narrative traditions. If Rorty celebrates the early Romantics of self-assertion, Gadamer, like Dilthey before him, looks towards the later Romantics in their concern with reconciling history and community with individual freedom and personal development.

The question here is not what is acknowledged by all post-foundationalist, namely the importance of history and culture in individual rationality, but how to interpret the contingency of history and culture as linguistically expressed in individual rationality. If the Anglo-Amercian pragmatical turn towards post-foundationalism recognized the pervasive influence of the historical context in the diversity of methodologies, the Continental hermeneutical, post-foundationalists rejected the hegemony of methods altogether and, instead, turned towards our self-understanding within practical contexts, and this is inevitably, as Dilthey recognized clearly, a moral quest - a quest for a Weltanschauung. The recognition in Anglo-American philosophy that Wissenschaft is not foundationalist is not yet a Weltanschauung embracing thought and action.

3.3 Individual in context

The culmination of epistemology in the Twentieth century, whether positivistic or phenomenological, was truly a quest for a scientific philosophy. The Anglo-American anti-foundationalist movement signalled the end of this foundational role of philosophy, and in doing so it also removed the epistemological foundations of positivistic science. Continental post-foundationalism draws upon the struggles of hermeneutics

and critical theory with positivistic rationalism in Germany during the 1960s and 70s, and also the opposition of hermeneutical phenomenologists, like Paul Ricoeur, against French structuralism. What is perhaps more surprising, is that Anglo-American post-foundationalists derive much of their impetus, as was evident from the internalist critique in Section 2, above, from problems within analytical philosophy - or, epistemology - itself. Post-foundationalists recognize that the myth of autonomous knowing and moral beings for what it is, namely, a historical-cultural project. In its place, they have put an understanding of our social and cultural practices, in whatever domain of specialization, as the rationality of narrative and counter-narrative, or an "interpretative dialectics" (Taylor, 1980). But such an interpretative dialectics is inevitably individually teleological and moral, and individually incarnated in historical-cultural contexts.

It is precisely because persons are situated fully both in nature and culture that they can never be dissolved into a logic of physical-causal explanations, but rather must be understood in the language of discovery and rediscovery of meaning in history and society. This realization led Rorty, just like Dilthey, to the literary studies, Gadamer and others to philology, and MacIntyre and Taylor to the social sciences. For post-foundationalists there are no epistemologically rooted methodological foundations, only interpretation and clarification will do for an understanding of the meaning of our historically and culturally situated actions and expressions. However, their interpretative constructions ultimately draw upon the lived experience that the meaning of our actions and expressions acquire in socially ordered and practical forms of life. If this is not quite 'folk psychology'; it was Dilthey's (1989/1883) view of the Geisteswissenschaften.

What Dilthey did not see so clearly but understood implicitly, is that in emphasizing the historical and dialogical nature of rationality, the rationality of our narrative accounts becomes inherently rhetorical. Thus, the superiority of one account over another remains a contingent or empirical matter; depending on the cogency of one's account and its capacity to persuade one's interlocutors so as to permit even one's opponents to at least recognize themselves in that account. If the contingency or relativity of such a view invites a rage - and the term is hardly too strong - for certitude it also, ironically, by intimating the uncertainties of our methodological convictions, opens up, or as Dilthey would have it, enriches us in a wider view of the complexities of human drama which, presumably, we can never individually or collectively fully encompass or exhaust. Unfortunately, the continuing obsession with certainty, especially in the human sciences, encourages a historical amnesia which precludes even the effect of irony as a reminder of our need for conversation. But even a logical argument cannot simply be a defense of experience; even experimentally derived experience. There must be a way of moving forward towards new understandings, clarifications, expositions, etc. To do this we must see ourselves as bearers of traditions contributing towards imaginative possibilities in mutual scrutiny and exhange, in dialogue or conversation, always in a quest for how we ought to live.

Post-foundationalist thought has elevated the principle of history, which was the 19th century foe of certitude and foundationalism (Popper, 1963/1945), to one which is central to our understanding. Of course, this immediately raises the question of truth. The question of truth in the human sciences is never explicitly addressed by Dilthey and we look for it in vain in Heidegger or Gadamer. The problem is that on the hermeneutical view the question of truth cannot be answered in

abstraction. If the foundationalist idea of truth was that of correspondence between thought and reality, sentences and facts, hermeneutics maintains that this conception is inescapable and insufficient. Evidently, to deny that truth has anything to do with our experience of reality is to rob it of its critical meaning. Foundationalists have also appealed to coherence - with assumptions, axioms, and definitions - an appeal with which hermeneutics has considerable sympathy. Even though neither correspondence nor coherence are absent from a determination of truth, for those in the hermeneutic tradition, truth is first of all a question of '<u>meaningfulness</u>' in the sense of disclosure (Heidegger's Unverborgenheit), un-concealment, fidelity, or in Dilthey's term, understanding (<u>Verstehen</u>). Gadamer is explicit that truth is never a question of methodological certitude but always one of, in Friedrich Schiller's words, the aesthetics of play (Mos, & Boodt, 1991a). The foundationalist quest for certitude is grounded in methodology and, ultimately, according to Gadamer, in the failure to understand the finitude of our individual existence. The finitude of human existence is carried in the language of dialogue; those who have certainty and foundations do not need dialogue, nor do they require morality. The search for an ultimate grounding whether in the quest for knowledge or action is a due to a profound misunderstanding. Neither knowledge nor morality have foundations and are embedded only in individual human action and conduct as part of a historically and culturally constituted community. Indeed, the aspirations to truth - methodology - and, morality - ethics - are precisely the way we cope when we are without foundations.

Narrative, whether in conversation or discourse is central to hermeneutical rationality and, hence, truth and morality. The rationality of beliefs is that they can be dialogically founded and thereby remain open to criticism. However, the formation of our beliefs and their winnowing in critical argument are always rooted in social-cultural practices, in historical traditions,

- and it is in this sense that post-foundationalist interpretation and understanding can begin to lay claim to validity, objectivity, or truth. Of course, this is long ways from Rorty's claim that "... nothing grounds our practices, nothing legitimizes them, nothing shows them to be in touch with the way things really are..." For Rorty it is not a matter of bringing our beliefs in conformity with something else, rather it is "reweaving our fabric of belief and desire, our attitudes towards various sentences in our language" (Rorty, 1986, p. 753, cited in Sullivan, 1987). But such a 'folk psychology' view of persons while antifoundationalist, is radically individualistic and without hope of moral consensus.

The European hermeneutical or critical theory tradition has been especially critical of the individualism, or absolutization of the person in Anglo-American post-foundationalism. That is, the latter is naive about the historical-cultural forces that shape our conception of and, therefore, our understanding of persons and their cultural endeavors. It is not enough to merely recognize the relativity of all our reason-giving in coping with practical or theoretical situations - this is the instrumental and ultilitarian spirit of, for example, Rorty's pragmatic post-foundationalism. There is on such a view a danger of seriously conflating the languages of scientific investigation, moral debate, political and social change, etc., thereby eroding the ground of language altogether and inviting the concomitant danger of reverting to the powers of selective success in our cultural endeavors. But the meaning of our languages only gains clarity in the context of socially ordered and practical contexts of our lived experience. It is especially with respect to pragmatism that the hermeneutical tradition has warned that the powers of our scientific, technological, social-cultural, and artistic endeavors could easily overwhelm individual human beings who are necessarily dependent upon and connected with the natural and social worlds which they try to understand and

control. The hermeneutic answer is to turn to our practices, their historical formation, and our implicit cultural understanding of them. It is this orientation which constitutes the solidarity or validity of our understanding concerning what sort of person I am to become. And on this endeavor, facts about human action necessarily are facts about what is moral. Wissenschaft is necessarily founded in a Weltanschauung - as Dithey understood only too well.

The hermeneutical post-foundationalist view offers at least some clues to an emerging folk psychology of human action. First, our individual knowledge and conduct cannot be understood apart from the social-historical world, or the traditions and communities within which we come to know and conduct ourselves. Second, as individual members of a community - participating in a culture and language - we are acquainted with the practices and conventions of that community such that we can extend and challenge, even if provisionally and in a consensual manner, these practices and conventions. Third, the imputed social and institutional traditions and their expression in individual practices, including the consensual interpretative narratives bridging the two, are essentially historicized, open-ended, and marked by intentionality or meaning. All this removes any motivation for empiricist or logicist foundations of human scientific inquiry and, importantly, provides a basis for a fundamental difference between the human and nartural sciences. Of course, the social-historical structures of the human world in terms of which our individual knowledge and actions are described are incarnate; neither these structures nor our individual participation in them are 'disembodied'. Unlike structuralist or organismic views of society, and also unlike all forms of methodological individualism, social, cultural, and historical structures are real collective structures - "objectifications of individual 'minds'. However, this means that psychology cannot be autonomous or independent of the other

human sciences. Dilthey (1989/1883) in his struggle to find a foundation for the human sciences, to ground human reason and affirm the relation between reason and life in order to resolve the crisis of his age, turned first of all to a psychology of lived experience (Dilthey, 1977/1894). In this endeavor to ground the human sciences in a descriptive and analytical psychology of lived experience, Dilthey came to see that such a psychology of was invariably open to interpretation. He therefore turned to the expressions of lived experience as the historically conditioned "objectifications of life" that provided the basis of his hermeneutical methodology for all the human sciences, including psychology.

4. LIVED EXPERIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING: HUMAN NATURE

"Every expression has a meaning insofar as it is a sign which signifies or points to something that is part of life. Life does not mean anything other than itself. There is nothing in it which points to a meaning outside it. (Dilthey, 1976/1906-1910, p. 236).

4.1 From psychology to history

Traditional theories of knowledge located the certitude of our knowledge of the world either in persons' cognitive capacities, or their sensory and perceptual capacities and the cognitive constructions based on them. With the demise of foundationalism in epistemology (Chapter 2), this quest for certitude has assumed an entirely new dimension by being thrown back on to our understanding of its diverse historical expressions. The difficulty that confronts this historical turn in epistemology is the question of its objectivity or validity. For after all, an understanding of the factual events of history has its point of departure in the assumption that historical events are the expressions of persons.

It was Wilhelm Dilthey (1989/1883) who, at the turn of the last century, sought in his critique of historical reason to establish a foundation for the human sciences in the possibility of our individual reflection on experience. According to Dilthey, the objectivity and validity of historical judgments are founded in an understanding of ourselves and others. The entire thrust of this critique culminated in Dilthey's (1977/1894) claim that the human

sciences were dependent on a description and analysis of our 'lived experience' that would reveal the whole of psychic life as foundational to an understanding of its historical expressions.

However, in a series of writings dating from the last decade of his life (1900 - 1910), Dilthey appeared to have abandoned his quest for a foundational science of the understanding of "lived experience" - his psychology - only to have returned to his original interests in history. In particular, he returned to his early work on Friedrich Schleiermacher and the latter's theory of interpretation, or hermeneutics. Yet in doing so, Dilthey never abandons his position with respect to the contribution of psychology to the understanding of historical variety, both in grounding hermeneutics in our understanding of lived experience and, in his typology of the Weltanschauungen in subsuming historical variety in a hypothetical typology of thought.

Throughout his writings, Dilthey posited a unique connection between life and history. "Life", writes Dilthey (1961/1906-1910), "is the fullness, variety and interaction, - within something continuous - experienced by individuals. Its subject matter is identical with history. At every point of history there is life. And history consists of life of every kind in the most varied circumstances. History is merely life viewed in terms of the continuity of mankind as a whole" (p. 256). Life is the ultimate, underlying ground of all human thought and action and the source from which the entire social-cultural-historical world arises. It is the comprehensive context within which individual lives take place. What changes in Dilthey's later writings is that our understanding of life, of individual lives, can be approached only through its manifestations, its "life expressions" in the course of history. "History must teach what life is; yet,

because it is the course of life in time, history is dependent on life and derives its content from it" (Dilthey, 1961/1906-1910, p. 262).

It is not my intent in this chapter to discuss the possibility of historical knowledge (Dilthey, 1976/1910; cf.Collingwood, 1977/1946) rather, within the context of Dilthey's claim concerning the historicity of all understanding, I am concerned with the psychological question of understanding individual human expressions that constitute the subject matter of the human sciences. This task is essentially a quest for our 'human nature', its psychological foundations in individual 'lived experiences', its 'expression' in the historical course of individual lives, its social and cultural 'objectifications', and the validity of these in our interpretations and clarifications of their meaning. First, let me briefly turn to the status of our quest for an understanding of our human nature.

4.2 Concerning human nature

Contemporary psychology has largely abandoned the quest for human nature; either for an understanding of other persons or ourselves. Ironically, the abandonment of this quest had its origin in the 17th century rationalist tradition which sought to find epistemological certitude in 'pure thought', that is, in our individual human nature. Thus, in his Sixth Meditation, Descartes (1962) writes the following.

> "... although I certainly do possess a body with which I am very closely conjoined; nevertheless, because, on the one hand, I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in as far as I am only a thinking and unextending thing, and as, on the other hand, I possess a distinct idea of body, in as far as it is only an extended and unthinking thing, it is certain that I [that is, my mind by which I am what I am], is entirely and truly distinct from my body, and may exist without it" (p. 91).

He adds, however,

> "... there is nothing which that nature teaches me more expressly [or more sensibly] than that I have a body which is ill affected when I feel pain... Nature likewise teaches me... that I am not lodged in my body as a pilot in a vessel, but that I am besides so intimately conjoined; and as it were intermixed with it, that my mind and body compose a certain unity" (p. 94, italics added).

By founding the certitude of our knowledge of the world, including others, in the certitude of human nature, Descartes influenced epistemology to the present day. But he also conceived of this human nature entirely in terms of the self-sufficiency of reason. The "certain unity" of mind and body was for Descartes a question of the deductive relation between irreconcilable substances. Moreover, whether the immediate certitude of the self or, rather, of its ideas, yielded the reality of an independent world remained open to argument, not proof. Yet such proof was needed as scientific inquiry took the reality of the external world for granted.

If all subsequent and varying forms of idealism derived their starting point in Descartes' cogito, science retained this legacy in its distinction between the objectivity of nature and the subjectivity of the investigator. However, even this distinction gave way as the empiricists, in their reliance on introspection, found no evidence for the existence of an 'unextended' thinking ego and, hence, dissolved human nature, including thought, into hypothetical psychological processes which mirrored physical ones. Thus, David Hume (1955/1739-1749) writes:

> "... we may observe, that the true idea of the human mind, is to consider it as a system of different perceptions or different existences, which are link'd together by the relation of cause and effect, and mutually produce, destroy, influence, and modify each other. Our impressions give rise to their correspondent ideas;... In this respect I cannot compare the soul more properly to any thing than a republic

> or commonwealth... [A]nd as the same individual republic may not only change its members, but also its laws and constitutions; in like manner the same person may vary his character and disposition, as well as his impressions and ideas, without losing his identity. Whatever changes he endures, his several parts are still connected by the relation of causation" (pp. 89-90).

Since these hypothetical psychological processes, including the relation of causation, yielded only experience, the existence of the external world, including other persons and the self, became a question of legitimate inference from experience to the world. In this speculative psychological endeavor of empiricist epistemology, the certainty of knowledge was relegated to the necessity of experience, and individual persons, human nature, were merely deemed to be the locus of these experiences. Human nature was considered to be coextensive with all nature the certitude of which had its foundation in observation.

Critical idealist efforts to preserve a domain of personal freedom in this 'world' of necessary experience derived the certainty of our knowledge of the world from the autonomous activities of individual minds. It was only the synthesis of our sensory and cognitive capacities, common to all rational beings, that ensured the certainty of our knowledge of the world. Rejecting a metaphysics of mental and physical substances as well as the dissolution of human subjectivity in the necessity of experience, they revived the reality of the power of the human mind in constructing the empirical world. However, these cognitive powers of the human mind were themselves nowhere to be found in experience but, rather, constituted the a priori grounds which were intended to bridge the chasm between the knower and the known.

This chasm between knower and known has come to have an ambiguous status in contemporary psychology. On the one hand,

the chasm is only too evident in our continuing obsession with methods; on the other, the chasm has become otiose in our monistic view of human nature as continuous with the natural world. Consequently, even if Descartes' legacy of a "certain unity" between mind and body remains a vital problem in epistemology, is commonplace in social practice, it has come to have only antiquarian status in psychology. The reason is that our discipline, perhaps more than any other science, has relegated the quest for understanding the person to the realm of the 'philosophical'. But the dilemma which confronts psychology as a natural science of the human 'mind' and behavior is that its explanations of either topic have as yet contributed little to an understanding of being human. It is therefore not surprising that psychological knowledge appears to be largely irrelevant to the other human sciences, the humanities, and in the solution of practical problems.

This state of affairs was not so dissimilar from the one that Dilthey confronted in his attempt to systematically understand our 'human nature' in his explication of the human sciences, especially psychology. Thus, Dilthey sought to bridge this chasm between knower and known in his concept of the structural nexus of psychic life. It was this structural nexus of psychic life as given in lived experience which constituted the basis of all human life and its social, cultural, and historical expressions. As Dilthey (1989/1883) noted, the human sciences are distinct from the natural sciences precisely because their mode of understanding presupposes an inner, underived and coherent, structural nexus of psychic life which grounds our individual lived experience as well as our understanding of lived experience. The continuity of life that embraces both the investigator and the historical objects of investigation is this structural nexus of psychic life as it is given in lived experience, that is, in the purposive relationship of life and world. The self 'understands'

(Verstehen) the world pre-reflectively, as lived, where this self-understanding is itself grounded in the structural nexus of psychic life. Thus, the structural nexus of psychic life is the foundation of both our lived experience and our understanding of this lived experience. Understanding is itself grounded in the temporal structure of psychic life.

This structural nexus of psychic life is never present as a whole in lived experience; it always transcends our lived experience and, yet, remains immanent in every particular lived experience. So that our understanding cannot be contained to particular lived experiences but is invariably drawn into a process of reflection which uncovers and draws out the manifold of experienceable connections that make up the structural nexus of psychic life. Thus, our understanding of lived experience is always dynamic and temporal, or purposive, since understanding is always given with lived experience in the acquired structure of psychic life and both are grounded in the structural nexus of psychic life. In the Ideen (1977/1894), Dilthey still believed that this understanding of lived experience could be made explicit by means of a descriptive and analytical psychology of inner perception. That is, that our understanding of lived experience could be analyzed and described such as to make the structural nexus of psychic life - really the descriptive certainty of our 'human nature' - the foundation of all the human sciences. If towards the end of his life he abandoned this descriptive and analytic psychology in favor of a interpretative analysis of life expressions, Dilthey never abandoned the interplay of lived experience and understanding as our most intimate acquaintance with historical knowledge.

The hermeneutical turn in understanding human nature really reflects Dilthey's struggle in attempting to find a certain ground for our 'understanding' in a descriptive and analytical psychology of inner perception. He slowly realized that no such

certain grounding could be attained, even in a descriptive as opposed to an explanatory, or hypothetical, psychology, since our descriptions and, hence, our understanding always admitted of interpretation on further reflection. It was therefore that he turned to hermeneutics for the possibility of a universally valid interpretation. However, as he learned from Schleiermacher (Dilthey, 1976/1900), hermeneutics is itself a question of analyzing the nature of '<u>understanding</u>' (hermeneutics as a metatheory of 'understanding') grounded in lived experience. Hence, if hermeneutics is to constitute a new methodology (as opposed to his descriptive psychology) for the human sciences it cannot ignore its basis in an understanding of lived experience. Nevertheless, Dilthey was quite aware that in so far as hermeneutics was concerned with the possibility and limits of valid historical knowledge, it did not merely belong to psychology. In fact, interpretation as a systematic procedure is only possible when the object or contents to be interpreted are relatively <u>fixed</u> so that we might turn to them, for re-interpretation and clarification, time and again. It is here that Dilthey now turns away from inner perception of the structural nexus of psychic life to the latter's relatively permanent expression in <u>individuals</u>, in social and cultural systems, and especially in language or text. That is, our understanding of all those mute manifestations of inner life is always dependent for its interpetation and clarification on speech preserved in written form.

4.3 Understanding others

We understand others, Dilthey wrote in the <u>Ideen</u> (1977/1894), by transposition from an understanding of ourselves. Confronted by a body which resembles our own and behaves in ways that we behave, we attribute it with an inner, or psychic life like our own. That is, we impute to others not

merely certain isolated thoughts, feelings, or strivings but the whole temporal complexity of the 'lived experience' that I find disclosed in reflection on my inner life. However, to understand another person is not merely to know that the other is having certain experiences but rather, in a process of constructive imagination to feel (Nacherleben), what H. A. Hodges (1952, pp. 117-118) terms, the "reverberations" of another's experience in myself. We find the limits of this understanding precisely at that point where we can no longer reconstruct the other's lived experience on the basis of our own. Nevertheless, it is our "[U]nderstanding alone [that] surmounts the limitation of the individual experience and, at the same time, lends to personal experiences the character and knowledge of life" (Dilthey 1976/1906-1910, p. 186).

Thus, the possibility of understanding the inner life of another exists, because this inner life is analogous to my own. In reflecting on my own lived experience I can understand the inherent possibilities expressed in the lived experiences of another. In understanding these expressions that belong to the lived experience of another, I turn them back into my lived experience and in that way enhance the possibility of my self-understanding. Now understanding in this sense is not a method, rather it is how I as a human being, conditioned by my physical, social, and historical circumstances, can be said to know myself and others as a continuity of lived experiences. Dilthey writes (1976/1906-1910) that "understanding presupposes experience and experience only becomes knowledge of life if understanding leads us from the narrowness and subjectivity of experience to the whole and the general" (p. 188). The reciprocal or complementary relationship between lived experience and understanding attains its most valid expression when I am able to apprehend another person's lived experience as a self-unfolding coherent process and so, do not merely understand, but also relive (Nacherleben) the life of the

another. Such understanding through reliving presupposes a common human nature (the structural nexus of psychic life) that is given individual expression in the developmental progression that characterizes the unique coherence of our lived experiences (the acquired structural nexus of psychic life). So that while I am present to myself in lived experience, my lived experience is always clarified through my understanding of others. But the exitence of others is given us only from the outside, in sensory events, gesture, words, and actions and we are enabled to reconstruct their inner only in so far as these external signs cohere in our common structural nexus of psychic life. "Understanding is a rediscovery of the I in the Thou: the mind rediscovers itself at ever higher levels of complex involvement" (Dilthey, 1976/1906-1910, p. 208).

It is not the case, however, that understanding through reliving involves a 'replication' of those psychological processes which brought the lived experience of another to its expression. Understanding the purpose, value, and significance, in short, the meaning of another's lived experience supervenes upon the causal order that connect the psychological states and processes of our lived experience. Our understanding of the lived experiences of others and ourselves owes nothing to the causal process of their origin, rather the more coherent our understanding the more it is emancipated from this causal order and, hence, the less it resembles a mere replication of what went on in the other's mind. It is only in our understanding the meaning of another person's lived experience that we are on the way towards establishing its objectivity and affirming its validity.

While Dilthey claims that our understanding others is grounded in the reflexive awareness of our own lived experience, it is through reflection on my lived experience that our understanding can become an intense intellectual process.

Nevertheless, neither through reflection, nor through the imaginative reconstruction of thought can we ever fully comprehend either our own inner life or that of others. The coherence of lived experience continuously eludes my understanding; our psychic life cannot ever be fully apprehended in inner experience. "We can only reach an approximate understanding of life: it lies in the nature of both understanding and life that the latter reveals quite different sides to us according to the point of view from which we consider its course in time" (Dilthey, 1976/1906-1910, p. 238).

Understanding lived experience constitutes for Dilthey (1977/1894) the experiential foundation of psychology, the human sciences and, also, the epistemological demarcation between the human and natural sciences. In the human sciences, an understanding of another's lived experience is given as a living structural unity that also belongs to the inquirer's reflection on his own lived experience, and which is rediscovered time and again in the understanding of others. In understanding others we proceed from the whole of this living structural unity of lived experience to an interpretation of its particular 'life expressions'. Even in our theoretical elaboration and explication of the meaning of these expressions, Dilthey (1977/1910) maintains that we must hold fast to an understanding of the unity of lived experience if we are to remain faithful in our understanding of the particular 'objectifications' of our human (nature) subjectivity. Therefore, the question of the reality and certitude of our knowledge of others is founded in our understanding of lived experience. Lived experience grants life reality; understanding its validity.

Dilthey (1977/1994) recognizes that our understanding of lived experience is refined, enriched, and illuminated by way of our thought. Contrary to what even some of his sympathetic interpreters have suggested, Dilthey never backs away from

discursively thinking about life. But he warns that our concepts and language must arise naturally out of our understanding of lived experience and not be imposed from without, especially from the sphere of the natural sciences (Dilthey, 1989/1883). If we are to bring the psychic connections of lived experience to understanding - through description and analysis, from an understanding of the whole of lived experience to an understanding of its parts - it must be in terms of those symbolically expressed concepts or categories which are empirically faithful to our lived experience. In thought and language we can bring our understanding to knowledge in the elaboration of our lived experience beyond our personal acquaintance in the present. However, in discursively carrying forward our understanding to include those cultural and institutional expressions which are our historical reality, thought itself must not lose its foundation in our lived experience. For unlike our thinking about the natural world, there can in thinking about the human world never be more in thought than there can be in our understanding (Mos & Boodt, 1990). It was the realization that our descriptions and analyses of lived experience are inherently discursive and our understanding of lived experience is expressed in language, that led to the hermeneutical turn in Dilthey's methodology. As was suggested above, this hermeneutical turn does not constitute a break with the psychological foundations of understanding lived experience, rather that Dilthey's (1977/1894) descriptive and analytical psychology finds its culmination in the interpretation and clarification of 'life expressions' which are essentially 'objectifications' of our lived experience (Dilthey, 1977/1910). In this move he affirms the mutual dependence among the human sciences (in contrast to the foundational role of psychology for the human sciences), and more fully grounds Descartes' "certain unity" that characterizes our human nature.

5. HUMAN NATURE: HERMENEUTICS OF LIFE EXPRESSIONS

5.1 Expressions of lived experience

The proposal that our understanding of lived experience is mediated by an understanding of the meaning of expressions of lived experience as the "objectifications of life" (the objectification of the structural nexus of psychic life), points to the central tenet of Dilthey's hermeneutic. If self-understanding including our understanding of others cannot be secured in a description and analysis of my lived experience - for all these are open to reformulation and reinterpretation in a never exhaustive quest for understanding - then, the meaningful relations that reflect the coherence of psychic life in myself and others, must be understood on the basis of their expression or objectifications. In briefly considering the various classes of these expressions, we find that Dilthey's focus shifts from a descriptive and analytical psychology of understanding lived experience to an interpretative understanding of its historical expressions as foundational to an understanding of human nature and, therefore, all the human sciences. What is remarkable, however, is that in this hermeneutical turn, Dilthey never wavers from the view that our understanding (Verstehen) of 'expressions' remains rooted in our lived experience.

Dilthey (1977/1910) divides the expressions of lived experience, in terms of their differing nature and degree of certitude which permits of their interpretation and understanding. The first class of expressions "comprises concepts, judgments, and the larger structures of thought"

(p. 123) that, as abstractions from the experiential context, come to expression primarily in their symbolization. Thus, Dilthey suggests that while our thought expressions may express the intention to communicate, these relatively unexpressive with respect to the wholeness of a person's lived experience. Nevertheless, our understanding of them is more precise and complete than the other two classes of expressions.

The second class of expressions consists of human actions, where every action "because of its relation to a purpose, this purpose is given through it" (p. 124). While actions are usually not intended to communicate or to express purposes, they do contain purposes, intentional or not, insofar as they disclose what they fulfill. Dilthey astutely recognizes that our actions are not merely personal expressions, but also include those cultural and institutional actions, rituals, and roles that remain as 'objectified' social-cultural traditions of anonymous or past inner realities. Our understanding of these latter actions is replete with difficulties for, while they can reveal purposes and values in prescribed circumstances, they may reveal little about a person's inner reality which contain numerous possibilities for action even though circumstances allow only one of these actions to be expressed. So while particular actions do disclose an individual's practical concerns, these may not yield an understanding of how a person might have acted in other circumstances.

The latter is expressed in the third class of expressions which Dilthey terms "vital expressions" or "expressions of a lived experience" (p. 124). Vital expressions include all those spontaneous expressions such as exclamations, gestures, etc., but also those conscious reflective expressions such as artistic or scientific productions that proceed from the entirety of lived experience. While spontaneous expressions are perhaps most widely revealing of our individual human nature they are also,

under the influence of current interest and circumstances, most easily suppressed, and distorted. In contrast, those vital expressions which proceed from the whole of our lived experience may reveal more about ourselves than we know. In fact, these latter expressions or 'objectifications' do not so much permit the understanding of a particular individual, as they disclose, through interpretation and understanding, the receding horizons of our human nature.

5.2 Hermeneutical psychology

When writing about our understanding of life expressions, Dilthey (1977/1910) assumes that these are invariably but not necessarily directly connected with the lived experiences and reflections on these lived experiences which comprise the structure of mental life. It is the invariability of this connection between life expressions and the structure of lived experience which constitutes the basis of all understanding and communication. The indirectness of the connection points to the fact that life expressions are situated in social-cultural contexts which loans our individual life expressions conventional form. While it is tempting to suggest, as does Ernst Cassirer (1957), who was very much influenced by Dilthey, that there exists a reciprocal relation between the structure and function of mental life, where neither structure nor function has priority in so far as all consciousness is already structured in lived experience. However, it must be recognized that this reciprocal relationship is mediated by the historical world wherein all our expressions are given social-cultural form - become objectifications - to which we have no access in reflection on our lived experience (Mos & Boodt, 1991b). Rather, our understanding of these life expression depends on interpretation and clarification of their shared meaning within specific social-cultural contexts.

This point has even greater force when we recall that understanding lived experience is itself a progressive elaboration of the inner psychic connections within and among those lived experiences which constitute the temporal course of our individual lives. Lived experiences are ultimate life units only in so far as they can be understood from the purview of the course of life itself. Those particular events in life are meaningful as lived experiences that are understood from within the whole of this purview. Dilthey (1961/1906-1910) writes that

> ... my present conception of life determines how I see every significant part of it today. From this it receievs its relation to other significant parts; it belongs to a context determined by the relation between the significant moments of life and my present interpretation of them. These meaning relationships constitute my present experience and permeate it" (p. 100).

Dilthey characterizes this temporal course of life psychologically in terms of the dynamics or development of the acquired structure of psychic life. In this process of articulating our understanding lived experience, the structural relationship between self and world is increasingly differentiated into distinct parts all inherent to a coherent whole. That is, what becomes especially salient in this articulation of lived experience is the emergence of an acquired nexus of psychic life, of the self, as the locus of the ordering of all our past experience. It is the psycholgical connections inherent in and among our lived experiences as these are understood in the present that constitutes our self-understanding - in autobiographical narrative - and open the possibility for transcending the present in understanding the past.

Recognition that our self-understanding is mediated by an understanding of life expressions (the 'objectifications' of psychic life in physical expressions of culture and society) that are part of the historical world is customarily thought to

have instigated Dilthey's move towards hermeneutics as the common methodology for the human sciences, including psychology. However, what is not often recognized is that the social-cultural form of life expressions also has implications for the reformulation of psychology in essentially historical - socially cultural - terms. That is to say, self-understanding (as the domain of psychology) depends upon the existence of a historico-cultural world of shared meanings - or what Dilthey sometimes refers to, following Hegel, as the "objective spirit".

> In this objective spirit", writes Dilthey (1977/1910), "the past is a permanent continuing present for us. Its realm extends from the style of life and the forms of social intercourse to the system of purposes which society has created for itself and to custom, law, state, religion, art, science, and philosophy. For even the work of genius represents a community of ideas, emotional life and ideals, in a particular time and place. From earliest childhood our self receives its nourishment from this world of objective spirit. It is also the medium in which the understanding of other persons and their expressions of life come about. For everything in which the human spirit has been objectified contains in itself something which is common to the I and the thou" (p. 208)

All expressions, whether intentional or not, from which we can gain access to the individual life structure belong to the realm of life-manifestations and hence constitute the departure point for understanding in all the human sciences, including psychology. In adopting this hermeneutical methodology, Dilthey's (1977/1894) focus in the Ideen shifted from an understanding - description and analysis - of lived experience in terms of the inner coherence of the structure of psychic life, to the interpretation and clarification of life expressions that constituted the objectifications of the structure of psychic life (Dilthey, 1976/1906-1910). But this shift reflected what was already incipient in the concept of lived experience, namely, that the structure of psychic life is incorporated its temporal expressions and, also the corollary,

that psychic life, lived experience, and our self-understanding are themselves historically structured. On this account, hermeneutics is also our methodological access to self-understanding.

Various commentators on Dilthey's work have suggested that the hermeneutical turn in Dilthey's thinking led him to abandon his empirical psychology of lived experience as foundational to his epistemology for the human sciences (Dilthey, 1985/1983). However, the view expressed here is that Dilthey did not abandon his descriptive and analytical psychology of lived experience so much as he evolved a more fully elaborate methodology of psychology, and all the human sciences, as essentially hermeneutical endeavors. That he did so by turning from lived experience to life expressions, by turning from reflection on the structure of mind to an understanding of the meaning of its social and cultural objectifications confronts us with an entirely new question concerning the validity of all 'psychological' understanding. For it is now in the interpretation of the meaning of life expressions that we must seek an understanding of the individual structure of psychic life.

5.3 Hermeneutics of life expressions

How then does Dilthey conceive of his hermeneutical methodology in the context of a historical psychology of lived experience? Dilthey (1977/1910) makes an important distinction between between so called elementary and higher forms of understanding life expressions. Elementary understanding refers to the understanding of particular life expressions without having to understand their relation to other life expressions or, indeed, the entire dynamic structure of mental life, although the latter is always contained in the social-cultural

circumstances themselves. Thus, we might understand a particular linguistic expression as an assertion, a particular action as fullfilling an intent, or a facial expression as one of joy. The fundamental relationship on which elementary understanding depends is the relationship of an expression to what it expresses. Presumably, such elementary understanding is possible because the life expressions which are its objects are conventionally constituted by lived experiences and, hence, shared in particular places and at particular times. In the conventional sphere the relationships between life expressions and lived experience are fixed in a common context which is itself an articulated order of objectified lived experiences. While the validity of elementary understanding of life expressions is enhanced in so far as the meaning of those expressions are 'conventional' or traditional, it remains problematic in that the expressions are not in part or whole bound into tradition or convention. It is when our elementary understanding becomes uncertain and the meaning of life expressions remains in doubt that we must resort to higher forms of understanding.

Higher forms of understanding approach particular life expressions within the interpretative context of the meaning of other life expressions as well as within the context of the larger whole of which it is a part. However, this way of proceeding is complicated by the fact that the coherence that is sought after, the meaningful relations inferred to exist among various life expressions, is always underdetermined by the evidence insofar as the inferences are themselves subject to interpretation. The uncertainty which adheres to higher forms of understanding may be partially relieved in the imaginative process of reliving the expression as rooted in our lived experience. Indeed, Dilthey maintains that the highest achievement of understanding is where life expressions are interpreted to proceed from the whole of persons inner lives:

that is, to retrospectively articulate the creative context - the historically conditioned lived experiences - which is meaningfully related to the life expression. This process has its analogy in the meaning relationships that obtain between the parts and the whole of a text, or between the parts and the whole of a series of life expressions.

It is especially those life expressions which have enduring and permanent form - as 'objectifications' - which may be subject to continuous interpretation and understanding or, exposition. The mutual dependence between lived experience and understanding, of other people and ourselves, gives rise to ever new objectifications of life; as ever new narratives available for exposition. These objectifications which constitute the whole of our historical world are a continuing hermeneutical challenge, for their meaning essentially remains open to whatever old or new expressions are meaningfully understood to fall within the horizons of our progressively deepened understanding of human nature. For all interpretative endeavors of understanding must find their validity in our lived experience; in our self-understanding. In this sense, psychology remains a foundational human science in understanding <u>human nature</u> as <u>incarnated</u> in the individual person.

The hermeneutical turn in Dilthey's methodology is the recognition that understanding lived experience is derivative from our understanding of its meaning as it is objectified in the physical world. We can only interpret that which has been given physical expression, including all those psychological processes that structure our lived experience. Our understanding of human individuality while founded on our lived experience finds its validity in the interpretation and clarification of the meaning of its culturally conditioned objectifications. It is on the basis of our understanding of the meaning of these objectifications as expressive of our <u>human nature</u> that we can

begin to understand the dynamic structure of our individual lives. But it is the latter that epistemologically grounds all understanding and knowledge. Foundationalism in epistemology narrowed our human nature to one or another of the functions of mind and, therefore, in its reductionism rejected the possibility of understanding human nature on the basis of its historically structured objectifications. But such an individualistic, a-historical, constructivist psychology has neither a conception of the body, the mind, or their "certain unity". It knows nothing of the reality of lived experience and the understanding of life expressions which gives rise to a mind affected world which is the subject-matter of all the sciences pertaining to our human nature.

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